



File Code: 1950
Date: July 23, 2018

WILLIAMSON ROCK/PACIFIC CREST NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL PROJECT
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
45 Day Comment Period Announcement

Introduction

Williamson Rock is a recreation area in the Angeles National Forest (ANF) historically used primarily for rock climbing. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) traverses the project area, paralleling and periodically crossing Little Rock Creek and its tributaries for approximately 2 miles. In September 2005, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposed the designation of approximately 8,283 acres of streams and riparian areas as critical habitat for the mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*) (MYLF), 615 acres of which were in Little Rock Creek and areas surrounding Williamson Rock. The designation triggered a one-year Forest Service closure of the Williamson Rock area that began on December 29, 2005, and the closure has since continued via Forest Orders and court injunction(s). Since issuing the initial closure, the ANF has continually received many comments from the public requesting the re-opening of the Williamson Rock area for recreational use.

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need of the project is to utilize adaptive management principles to protect natural resources in the area including the federally listed MYLF, peregrine falcon and other sensitive resources while providing for a quality, sustainable recreation opportunity at Williamson Rock, and public use and enjoyment of the PCT where it passes the project area.

The ANF proposes to provide limited, managed recreational activities at Williamson Rock and in the surrounding vicinity. The proposed action would include allowing access to the PCT and limited seasonal access to Williamson Rock, while protecting the MYLF and other unique resources.

Alternatives

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluates the following management alternatives for the Williamson Rock area to provide a full comparison for consideration by the decisions makers and the public.



- **Alternative 1: No Action.** Under Alternative 1, the project area would be accessible to year-round dispersed recreational use with the management measures that were in place prior to the December 2005 closure.
- **Alternative 2: Current Closure Management.** Alternative 2 would continue the temporary closure of the entire project area. The duration of the long-term closure of the area would be based on MYLF recovery.
- **Alternative 3: Proposed Action (Adaptive Management).** Alternative 3 would provide seasonal recreational use at Williamson Rock, year-round use of the PCT in the project area, and implement measures with adaptive management to protect MYLF, MYLF habitat, and other unique resources in the project area.
- **Alternative 4: PCT Reroute (Adaptive Management).** Alternative 4 includes all components described in Alternative 3, with the exception that a 2.5-mile segment of the PCT in the project area would be rerouted. Under Alternative 4, the PCT would be rerouted to divert hiking traffic away from Williamson Rock and to avoid crossing Little Rock Creek (MYLF designated critical habitat).

The Forest Service will identify its preferred alternative in the Final EIS.

Reviewers should provide the Forest Service with their comments during the review period of the Draft EIS. Timely submission of comments will enable the Forest Service to analyze and respond to the comments and to use information acquired in the preparation of the Final EIS, thus avoiding undue delay in the decision making process.

An electronic copy of the Draft EIS and the latest project updates and information are available for review at the USDA Forest Service website at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=43405>.

Written Comments on the Draft EIS. Written comments will be accepted for 45 days following the date that a Notice of Availability is published in the **Federal Register**.

Written comments on the Draft EIS should be sent through an online comment form through the website listed above (right-hand side: comment on a project);

email to: Angeles_SGMNM@fs.fed.us;

or mail to the Physical address:

USDA Forest Service, Angeles National Forest
Subject: WR DEIS comments
701 N. Santa Anita Avenue
Arcadia, CA 91006

Public Meetings

The Forest Service will hold two Draft EIS public meetings. The public meetings are an opportunity for interested parties to receive information, ask questions and share concerns, or provide written comments on the Draft EIS. The meetings will be open-house format with


project documents and information available. Only written comments will be accepted at the meeting. Details on the public meeting are as follows:

	Meeting #1	Meeting #2
Location	ANF Acton Work Center	Angeles Training and Conference Center
Date	Thursday, August 9, 2018	Saturday, August 11, 2018
Time	7 pm to 9 pm	1 pm to 3 pm
Address	33708 Crown Valley Road Acton, CA 93510	701 N. Santa Anita Avenue Arcadia, CA 91006

The Forest Service decision for the project occurring on National Forest System lands is subject to administrative review by the Forest Service Regional Office, in accordance with 36 CFR 218. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments during a public comment period are eligible to request this administrative review.

Thank you for your interest in the management of public land.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey Vail', followed by a small square stamp.

JEFFREY VAIL
Forest Supervisor